14 January 2016 - Cold weather is expected to continue through into the weekend with widespread frosts, ice and snow for some places

Cold weather has now spread across much of the UK with many places waking up to a frosty start and much colder conditions compared to the winter so far. Whilst this will be the first spell of 'wintry' weather for many, particularly across England and Wales, the conditions expected are fairly typical for January and the winter season in the UK.

On Thursday night, sleet and snow showers will affect northern and western parts of Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales with some showers reaching parts of the West Midlands and southwest England. As well as snow, ice will be an additional hazard where the showers fall as rain or sleet on untreated surfaces.

Yellow 'be aware' Severe weather warnings for snow and ice have been issued for these locations and may be updated through the night. Accumlations of snow will be greatest over the higher ground of Scotland, but a few centimetres could accumulate at low levels across Wales and possibly the West Midlands and southwest England. The map below illustrates those areas that may see snow.

Areas that may see snow 14-15 January 2016

Chief Operational Meteorologist Paul Gundersen said "A cold, unstable northwesterly airstream covers the UK. This will bring showers, which will become heavier, more frequent and increasingly wintry later on Thursday. People should be aware of the likelihood of some travel disruption and difficult driving conditions from sleet and snow but also ice on untreated surfaces"

For the rest of this week and into the weekend an arctic maritime airmass will bring cold weather across the UK.

The weather is expected to become more settled with the attention turning towards chilly daytime temperatures and low overnight minimum temperatures with widespread frost and icy stretches likely in places. Temperatures are expected to drop below freezing widely overnight with some severe frosts.

Sleet and snow showers will be mostly confined to coastal areas exposed to the northerly winds, but these could come inland at times with the snow likely to settle. However, by day, the bulk of the country will experience plenty of dry weather with crisp winter sunshine.

To find out what weather you can expect in your area, take a look at our Seven day forecast pages and keep track of any Severe weather warnings for your area.

Daytime temperatures this weekend

Night time temperatures this weekend

The cold weather and risk of frost and ice could catch motorists, pedestrians and cyclists out as well as having health consequences for vulnerable people.

Dr Angie Bone, head of Extreme Events at Public Health England, said:

"Many places are going to feel really cold for the next few days, which may be a bit of a shock after our recent milder weather, so it's really important people take extra care when out and about.

"It's worth remembering that while most outdoor slips, trips and falls in weather like this are of those who are of working age, accidents can happen to anyone.

"If you're staying indoors have plenty of warm food and drinks to stay warm. Try to maintain indoor temperatures to at least 18°C, particularly if you are not mobile, have long term illness or are over 65, and check weather forecasts and plan your day around them.

"Also take some time to think about how the bad weather may affect your friends and family, particularly if they are older or very young or have pre-existing health conditions. These groups can be particularly vulnerable. Remember that older people may not go outside to the shops, to hospital appointments and so on when weather is bad, so think what you could do to help them.

"Although most of our advice on keeping warm and well in cold weather may seem like common sense, it's important to remember that cold kills, even in places where the temperatures aren't at their lowest."

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